

Village Theatre Announces Complete Casting for 23rd Annual FESTIVAL OF NEW MUSICALS

ISSAQUAH, WA (July 21, 2026) – Village Theatre is excited to announce the casting for the 23rd Annual **Festival of New Musicals**, which takes place August 7-9, 2026, at the Francis J. Gaudette Theatre in Issaquah. Casting for all four staged readings in the Festival includes local theater artists showcasing the vast wealth of talent in the Seattle area.

Tickets are \$10 each. Limited tickets and waitlists are available for all public Festival events, and seats will be released up to day-of-show based on availability.

"Every year, hundreds of patrons and artists gather in the shadows of the Issaquah Alps to celebrate the new musical," said Artistic Director Adam Immerwahr. "I can't wait for our community to join in the launch of these incredible, powerful, and hilarious new works—performed by some of Seattle's top musical theater talent. Village Theatre continues to write the future of musical theater, and this year's Festival promises to be another thrilling chapter."

Village Theatre has launched more than 180 new musicals into the universe, sending them across the country, to Broadway, and worldwide, and jumpstarting beloved hits like *Million Dollar Quartet* and the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Next to Normal*.

"The Festival of New Musicals is one of my favorite weekends of the year," said Managing Director Derek Watanabe. "I love seeing people spend a few days immersed in new work—running into friends, comparing notes on the shows they've seen, and sharing in the excitement of discovering something special. This year will be even more fun as Front Street comes alive with Al Fresco activities, adding to the energy throughout downtown Issaquah. It's a great reminder that theatre isn't just about what happens on stage. It's about the connections and sense of community it creates."

Village Theatre's 2026 Festival is sponsored by the Wilke Family Foundation and supported by a community of individual donors committed to investing in New Works.

2026 FESTIVAL SHOW INFORMATION

Widows

FRIDAY, AUGUST 7, 7:30 p.m.

Book by **Matthew Greene**

Music and Lyrics by **Kira Stone**

Directed by **STEPHEN BRACKETT**

Music Directed by **ELISA MONEY**

CAST

Andi Alhadeff (Cora Peterson), **Ethan Carpenter** (Alvin/Wes), **Rebecca Cort** (Pearl Ward), **Sarah Rose Davis** (Harriett Price), **Anteia DeLaney** (Faye/Linda Jo), **Lauren Drake** (Bonnie Bennett), **Mark Ivy** (Tom/Everett), **Trina Mills** (Margie Reed), **Jessie Selleck** (Joyce Kelly), and **Aaron Shanks** (Ronald)

Bonnie feels trapped in her 1950s suburban life until a hit-and-run accident ends her abusive marriage and brings her face-to-face with a group of supportive fellow widows at the funeral home.

Soon Bonnie learns that these ladies were responsible for her husband's death and the demise of countless other monstrous men like him. Given the chance to join them in their vigilante ways while her suspicious brother-in-law breathes down her neck, Bonnie wonders if she's the murdering kind.

With a driving pop score, a dark sense of humor, and a big moral predicament, *Widows* takes the audience on one woman's dizzying quest to regain her power.

Love is Dead

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 2:00 p.m.

Book and Music by **Brett Ryback**

Book and Lyrics by **Jeff Luppino-Esposito**

Directed by ADAM IMMERWAHR

Music Directed by TIM SYMONS

CAST

Mark Emerson (Blake, etc.), **James D. Gish** (Cody), and **Lauren Paris** (Jordan)

It's a rom-com to die for! Created by rising star writers Brett Ryback and Jeff Luppino-Esposito, *Love Is Dead* is a wildly irreverent, girl-meets-ghost musical comedy that's screamingly funny and bursting with spirited, pop-infused songs.

On Halloween weekend, heartbroken and recently single Jordan books a solo getaway to write the article that could change her life. When she finds her guest house has an unexpected roommate—a devastatingly sexy ghost who lives to torment short-term renters—sparks fly, souls collide, and things get delightfully weird. Sometimes the only way to feel alive again... is to fall for someone who isn't.

Jet City Improv presents: An Improvised Musical!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 5:00 p.m.

You bring the title—we bring the show. With Broadway in our hearts and chaos in our hands, the cast creates a fully improvised musical right before your eyes. No script. No plan. Every word, step, and note is made up on the spot—raw, fearless, and on fire.

From show-stopping numbers to wild twists, this is musical theater like you've never seen before.

One night only. One chance to witness the magic. Don't miss it.

Let Me Fly

SATURDAY, AUGUST 8, 8:00 p.m.

Book and Lyrics by **Minhyung Cho**

Music by **Chanhong Min**

English Translation and Lyrics by **Michael K. Lee**

Directed by DESDEMONA CHIANG
Music Directed by ALMA DAVID TAYLOR

CAST

Diana Huey (Sunhee), **Kawika Huston** (Young Namwon), **Heesun Hwang** (Jungbun), and **Michael K. Lee** (Old Namwon)

1969. Apollo 11 lands on the Moon. That same night in a backwoods city in Korea, Namwon—the town tailor—receives an acceptance letter to Korea’s finest Design Academy, getting him closer to achieving his dreams. While envisioning the future, his life is unexpectedly transformed by a cosmic event, rendering him unconscious.

Next thing he knows, everything has changed yet seems eerily familiar. The year is now 2020, and he meets Sunhee, an elderly woman who agrees to help him. Determined to return to 1969 and the love of his life, Jungbun, Namwon constructs his plan to go back in time.

An utterly charming story of love across time and space, the Festival marks *Let Me Fly*’s debut full English translation, following on the heels of its critically-acclaimed run in South Korea.

An Optimist’s Guide To The Dark Ages

SUNDAY, AUGUST 9, 2:00 p.m.

Music by **Michael Kooman**

Book and Lyrics by **Christopher Dimond**

Directed by DÁMASO RODRIGUEZ

Music Directed by R.J. TANCIOCO

CAST

Anne Allgood (Mother), **Kyle Nicholas Anderson** (Percival), **Danny Kam** (Mother Superior), **Ashley Lanyon** (Flavian), **Anden Leo** (Copernileo), **Karin Terry** (Hildegard), and **Jason Weitkamp** (Sir Brontis)

The Dark Ages: A time of plagues, pestilence, and poor personal hygiene.

But in the midst of the mud and the muck, Percival von Schmootz remains impossibly hopeful. In fact, he is the world’s one and only optimist, which does not go unnoticed by the jaded residents of his hometown, who are constantly irritated by his positive worldview.

When the Bubonic Plague wipes out the entirety of said hometown, Percival sets out on a quest to personally end the Dark Ages. His efforts meet with hilarious failure at every turn, until he ultimately learns what enlightenment truly means.

With the signature humor of Village favorites Kooman & Dimond (*The Noteworthy Life of Howard Barnes*, *The Break*) and a ridiculously fun musical theater score, *An Optimist’s Guide to the Dark Ages* will have audiences walking out with a sunnier outlook—and an urge to wash their hands.

ABOUT VILLAGE THEATRE

Based in Issaquah, Wash., with operations in Everett, Wash., Village Theatre is a leading producer of musical theater in the Pacific Northwest. Producing entertaining, quality productions since 1979, Village has grown into one of the region's best-attended theatres. Village is nationally recognized for its contribution to the development of new musicals, having supported the creation of more than 180 new works to date; and also

takes pride in nurturing tomorrow's audiences through its Youth Education programs, serving thousands of young people and their families annually.

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FOR EDITORS/PRODUCERS

WHAT: The Festival of New Musicals

Don't miss your chance to see the next big musical hit at Village Theatre's annual Festival of New Musicals! Join this theatrically packed weekend to enjoy stage readings of brand-new works from some of the nation's brightest musical theater creators, presented in collaboration with some of the Seattle area's finest performers to create the future of America's most extraordinary art form.

Village Theatre has launched more than 180 new musicals into the universe, sending them across the country, to Broadway, and worldwide. The Festival jumpstarted Broadway favorites like *Million Dollar Quartet* and *Next to Normal*.

WHERE:

Village Theatre
Francis J. Gaudette Theatre
303 Front Street N, Issaquah

WHEN:

August 7-9, 2026

TICKETS:

\$10 general admission
Seats must be reserved in advance

For tickets and waitlist information >> VillageTheatre.org/Festival

CONNECT WITH VILLAGE THEATRE

VillageTheatre.org

Facebook - [/VillageTheatre](https://www.facebook.com/VillageTheatre)

Instagram - [@village_theatre](https://www.instagram.com/village_theatre)

YouTube - [/villagetheatre1](https://www.youtube.com/villagetheatre1)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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